

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed March 17, 2006 has been carefully reviewed and the following remarks are made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-2, 4-11, 13-38, 40-75 and 79-85 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-2, 4-11, 13-38, 40-75 and 79-85 stand rejected. Claims 3, 12, 39 and 76-78 have been canceled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer. Claims 1, 19, 28, 46, 55 and 64 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

The rejection of Claims 1-11, 13-38, 40-75, 79-82 and 85 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Customer Support System in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0053980 to Suliman, Jr. et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Suliman, Jr.") is respectfully traversed.

Customer Support System describes a system for providing customer support related to product services and repairs. In the system, an authorized service provider has trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products. Notably, Customer Support System does not describe providing a user with a price estimate for a service call prior to scheduling the service call, wherein the price estimate is provided without contact between the user and another human being.

Suliman, Jr. describes a registration system that may be linked to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products (paragraph 14). Throughout the life of a product, a consumer will preferably utilize the provided repair links to service his/her registered products (paragraph 76). By way of example only, a consumer can link to a repair shop that specializes in the particular product sought to be registered (paragraph 76). In this fashion, the consumer can schedule to bring the product in for maintenance or repair (paragraph 76). Consumers can schedule repairs and maintenance for their registered products with local service organizations at the touch of a button (paragraph 14). The registration system includes an account summary page (800) that includes a product summary field (820) in which each product registration information file is listed

(paragraph 63). From this field, consumers can access information, service, repair, secondary market and other product related links (paragraph 63).

The Examiner alleges on page 6 of the Office Action that Suliman, Jr. “further discloses displaying the at least one available appointment for scheduling the service call.” Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s allegation. Suliman, Jr. does not describe or suggest displaying appointment times. Rather, Suliman, Jr. merely discloses providing links to repair services. Specifically, Suliman, Jr. describes that “the registration system may also be linked to service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products. Consumers can schedule repairs or maintenance for their registered products with local service organizations at the touch of a button.” See Suliman, Jr. at paragraph [0014]. The system described in Suliman, Jr. merely links a user to repair service websites, wherein the scheduling takes place. Further, Suliman, Jr. does not describe a system that provides a plurality of appointment times for a plurality of service providers within a single calendar schedule. Rather, as set forth above, Suliman, Jr. merely describes linking a user to service websites.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of original dependent Claim 3 and recites a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, wherein the method comprises “obtaining product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment . . . determining, by a first computing unit including a web browser, whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product or a service provider different than the manufacturer . . . automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider based on the product information and on said determination made by the first computing unit without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule.”

Neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a method of enabling scheduling of a service call

as is recited in Claim 1. Specifically, neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests automatically providing to a user at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule, as required by Applicants' claimed invention. Rather, Customer Support System merely describes providing, by an authorized service provider, trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products, and Suliman, Jr. describes linking a registration system to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products, utilizing the provided repair links to service the registered products and linking to a repair shop that specializes in a particular product sought to be registered. While Suliman, Jr. generally describes scheduling repairs and maintenance at the touch of a button, Suliman, Jr. does not describe or suggest automatically providing to a user at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claim 3 has been canceled. Claims 2-11, 13-18, 73, 79-82 and 85 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2-11, 13-18, 73, 79-82 and 85 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2-11, 13-18, 73, 79-82 and 85 likewise are patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claim 19 recites a method of enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, wherein the method comprises "obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by a user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network . . . determining, by the second computing unit including a web browser, whether the product is serviced by a

manufacturer of the product or a service provider different than the manufacturer . . . automatically providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information and based on said determination made by the second computing unit, wherein said automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being, and said automatically providing includes providing based on a determination to display the at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling the service call . . . automatically providing from the first computing unit to the user, prior to scheduling the service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being.”

Neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a method of enabling scheduling of a service call as recited in Claim 19. Specifically, neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests automatically providing from a first computing unit to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being, as required by Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, Customer Support System merely describes providing, by an authorized service provider, trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products, and Suliman, Jr. describes linking a registration system to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products, utilizing the provided repair links to service the registered products and linking to a repair shop that specializes in a particular product sought to be registered. While Suliman, Jr. generally describes scheduling repairs and maintenance at the touch of a button, Suliman, Jr. does not describe or suggest automatically providing from a first computing unit to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 19 is submitted to be patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claims 20-27 and 74 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 19. When the recitations of Claims 20-27 and 74 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 19, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 20-27 and 74 likewise are patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claim 28 recites a system for enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, wherein the system comprises “at least one processor adapted to obtain product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment . . . said at least one processor adapted to . . . determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product or a service provider different than the manufacturer . . . provide to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call, wherein the at least one available appointment is based on the product information and on the determination made by said at least one processor, and said at least one processor adapted to provide the at least one available appointment based on a determination to display the at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling the service call . . . provide to the user, prior to scheduling the service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being.”

Neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a system for enabling scheduling of a service call as recited in Claim 28. Specifically, neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests at least one processor adapted provide to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being, as required by Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, Customer Support System merely describes providing, by an authorized service provider, trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products, and Suliman, Jr. describes linking a registration system to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products, utilizing the provided repair links to service the registered products and linking to a repair shop that specializes in a particular product sought to be registered. While Suliman, Jr. generally describes

scheduling repairs and maintenance at the touch of a button, Suliman, Jr. does not describe or suggest at least one processor adapted provide to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 28 is submitted to be patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claims 29-38, 40-45 and 75 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 28. When the recitations of Claims 29-38, 40-45 and 75 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 28, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 29-38, 40-45 and 75 likewise are patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claim 46 recites a system for enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, wherein the system comprises “means for obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network, wherein said first computing unit includes a web browser, is configured to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product or a service provider different than the manufacturer . . . means for providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information and the determination made by said first computing unit, wherein the means for providing provides without interaction between the user and any other human being, and said means for providing provides the at least one available appointment based on a determination to display to the user the at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling the service call . . . means for providing from the first computing unit to the user, prior to scheduling the service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being.”

Neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a system for enabling scheduling of a service call

as recited in Claim 46. Specifically, neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests means for providing from a first computing unit to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being, as required by Applicants' claimed invention. Rather, Customer Support System merely describes providing, by an authorized service provider, trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products, and Suliman, Jr. describes linking a registration system to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products, utilizing the provided repair links to service the registered products and linking to a repair shop that specializes in a particular product sought to be registered. While Suliman, Jr. generally describes scheduling repairs and maintenance at the touch of a button, Suliman, Jr. does not describe or suggest means for providing from a first computing unit to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 46 is submitted to be patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claims 47-54 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 46. When the recitations of Claims 47-54 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 46, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 47-54 likewise are patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claim 55 recites at least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of enabling scheduling a service call, wherein the method comprises "obtaining product information regarding a product from a user . . . determining, by the machine, whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product or a service provider different than the manufacturer . . . automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information and said determination made by the machine, wherein said automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being,

and said automatically providing includes providing based on a determination to display the at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling the service call . . . automatically providing to the user, prior to scheduling the service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being.”

Neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a method of enabling scheduling a service call as recited in Claim 55. Specifically, neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests automatically providing to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being, as required by Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, Customer Support System merely describes providing, by an authorized service provider, trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products, and Suliman, Jr. describes linking a registration system to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products, utilizing the provided repair links to service the registered products and linking to a repair shop that specializes in a particular product sought to be registered. While Suliman, Jr. generally describes scheduling repairs and maintenance at the touch of a button, Suliman, Jr. does not describe or suggest automatically providing to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 55 is submitted to be patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claims 56-63 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 55. When the recitations of Claims 56-63 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 55, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 56-63 likewise are patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claim 64 recites an article of manufacture comprising “at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing a scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance, the computer

readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising . . . computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network . . . computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product or a service provider different than the manufacturer . . . computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information and the determination made by the computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by the manufacturer of the product or the service provider different than the manufacturer, and said computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide the at least one available appointment causes a computer to provide the at least one available appointment based on a determination to display the at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling the service call . . . computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from the first computing unit to the user, prior to scheduling the service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being.”

Neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests an article of manufacture as is recited in Claim 64. Specifically, neither Customer Support System nor Suliman, Jr., considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from a first computing unit to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call without interaction between the user and any other human being, as required by Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, Customer Support System merely describes providing, by an authorized service provider, trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products, and Suliman, Jr. describes linking a registration system to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products, utilizing the provided repair links to service the registered

products and linking to a repair shop that specializes in a particular product sought to be registered. While Suliman, Jr. generally describes scheduling repairs and maintenance at the touch of a button, Suliman, Jr. does not describe or suggest computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from a first computing unit to a user, prior to scheduling a service call, a price estimate for the service call. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 64 is submitted to be patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

Claims 65-72 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 64. When the recitations of Claims 65-72 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 64, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 65-72 likewise are patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-11, 13-38, 40-75, 79-82, and 85 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 83 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr. and in further view of U.S. Patent 5,943,652 to Sisley et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Sisley") is respectfully traversed.

Customer Support System and Suliman, Jr. are described above. Sisley describes a method for assigning resource requests to resource providers using optimization, artificial intelligence and constraint-processing. Specifically, the method includes prioritizing the resource requests using an assignment set defining a root node of a search tree. Notably, Sisley does not describe or suggest automatically providing to a user at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule.

Claim 83 depends from independent Claim 1 which recites a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, wherein the method comprises "obtaining product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment . . . determining, by a first computing unit including a web

browser, whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product or a service provider different than the manufacturer . . . automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider based on the product information and on said determination made by the first computing unit without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule.”

None of Customer Support System, Suliman, Jr. or Sisley, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment as is recited in Claim 1. Specifically, none of Customer Support System, Suliman, Jr. or Sisley, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests automatically providing to a user at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule, as required by Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, Customer Support System merely describes providing, by an authorized service provider, trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products. Suliman, Jr. describes linking a registration system to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products, utilizing the provided repair links to service the registered products and linking to a repair shop that specializes in a particular product sought to be registered. Sisley merely describes prioritizing resource requests. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr. and in further view of Sisley.

Claim 83 depends, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claim 83 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 83 likewise is patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr. and in further view of Sisley.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claim 83 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 84 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr. and in further view of Somheil (“Bringing Good Things to Market”) is respectfully traversed.

Customer Support System and Suliman, Jr. are described above. Somheil describes a web site that enables users to access information on and purchase GE Appliances products. The web site further allows a user to access the user’s purchase history with GE. Notably, Somheil does not describe or suggest automatically providing to a user at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule.

Claim 84 depends from independent Claim 1 which recites a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, wherein the method comprises “obtaining product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment . . . determining, by a first computing unit including a web browser, whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product or a service provider different than the manufacturer . . . automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider based on the product information and on said determination made by the first computing unit without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule.”

None of Customer Support System, Suliman, Jr. or Somheil, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment as is recited in Claim 1. Specifically, none of Customer Support System, Suliman, Jr. or Somheil, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests automatically providing to a user at least one

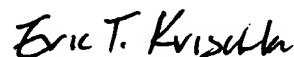
available appointment within a calendar schedule for scheduling a service call with at least one service provider without interaction between the user and any other human being, and enabling the user to select one available appointment for at least one service provider from the calendar schedule, as required by Applicants' claimed invention. Rather, Customer Support System merely describes providing, by an authorized service provider, trained technicians ready to troubleshoot and repair a plurality of products. Suliman, Jr. describes linking a registration system to a plurality of service organizations that provide maintenance and repair services for consumer products, utilizing the provided repair links to service the registered products and linking to a repair shop that specializes in a particular product sought to be registered. Somheil, merely describes a merchant website that enables a user to preview and purchase products. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr. and in further view of Somheil.

Claim 84 depends, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claim 84 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 84 likewise is patentable over Customer Support System in view of Suliman, Jr. and in further view of Somheil.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claim 84 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing remarks, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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